



# JACL IN THE NEWS

Summer/Fall 2007

## Day of Remembrance Event Focuses on Civil Rights

To honor those citizens who paid a personal sacrifice from the internment, and to examine historical and current threats to civil rights in America, the Portland JACL held an educational Day of Remembrance event on February 17, 2007

“Fighting for Civil Rights in an Era of Terror;” featured a distinguished panel of experts who discussed their firsthand knowledge of civil rights issues and threats. The event also included a viewing of the film, *A Most Unlikely Hero*, which documents Captain Bruce Yamashita’s battle against racism in the U.S. Marine Corps. Captain Yamashita and filmmaker Steve Okino were present to discuss the film after the viewing.

According to Portland JACL Chapter President John Kodachi, “We believe that this event accomplished two vital goals: to honor the Japanese Americans who were unjustly detained as a result of Executive Order 9066, and to educate the community about the internment and other civil rights threats we all face as Americans.”

The panel discussion featured notable civil rights experts



and educators including Peggy Nagae, who discussed issues involving the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and parallels to today.

Among other distinguished panelists, Brandon Mayfield addressed the audience with an emotional account of his civil rights struggle since he was wrongfully jailed as a “material witness” in the deadly Madrid train bombings.

## Adidas pulls offensive shoe after Portland JACL raises concern

Thanks to the efforts of the Portland JACL and other local civil rights groups, Adidas has agreed to recall a line of shoes with logos offensive to Asian Americans.

The shoe company, with offices in Portland, released a new line of shoes, called the “YI Huf.” The shoe features a buck-toothed, slant-eyed character with a bowl haircut.

The character was created by Chinese-American artist, Barry McGee, based on caricatures of himself as a boy. Adidas released Huf as the first in their “Yellow Series” of limited release shoes.

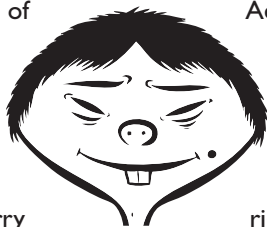
Portland JACL President John Kodachi’s concerns on behalf of the local Asian community were voiced in television news interviews and articles in *The Oregonian*.

According to Kodachi, “The caricature

is all too reminiscent of the dehumanizing images depicted of Asians during the hysteria of “Yellow Peril” and World War II...our objection is not with the artist who

created the caricature, but rather with Adidas for reproducing the stereotypical image on its shoes, thereby taking the artistic work out of its original context...While we certainly support an artist’s right of self-expression, we cannot support Adidas’s commercialization of such a racially offensive product, even if on a limited scale.”

After being inundated with similar complaints from concerned citizens and other Asian American groups, Adidas finally responded by pulling the remaining shoes from shelves.



## Community Support

The Portland JACL supports and sponsors cultural activities in the community.

One such activity is the annual Minidoka Pilgrimage. The Summer program provides an opportunity to share memories, ask questions, and learn more about the Minidoka Internment experience.

## Become Involved

The Portland JACL focuses on civil rights for all citizens and celebrates the proud heritage of the Japanese American community.

For more information, please visit our website: <http://www.pdxjacl.org>.

You will find recent newsletters, detailed information about the organization, and membership information.

Please contact us anytime at 1-877-843-6914 or PO Box 86310, Portland, OR 97286.